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Celli

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(54) **WHEELBARROW WAGON CONVERSION**

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B62B 5/08 (2006.01)

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B62B 1/002 (2013.01); **B62B 5/085** (2013.01);
B62B 1/186 (2013.01); **B62B 1/204** (2013.01);
B62B 3/02 (2013.01); **B62B 2206/006**
(2013.01); **B62B 2301/10** (2013.01)

USPC **280/653**; 280/47.31

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

USPC 280/30, 65, 652, 653, 654, 659, 47.16,
280/47.3, 47.31, 47.32

See application file for complete search history.

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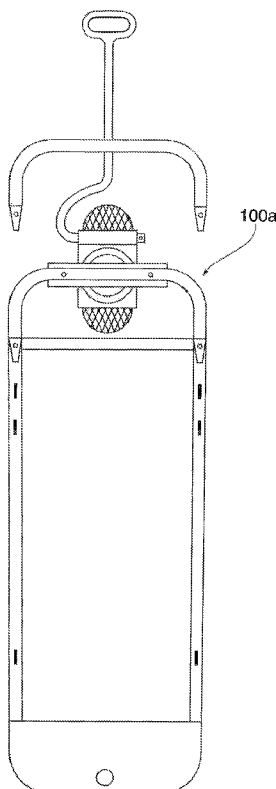
Primary Examiner — John Walters

(57)

ABSTRACT

A wheelbarrow conversion kit is used to convert a wheelbarrow structure to a pull wagon or to accommodate a push blade. The handles of the wheelbarrow are removed and an adaptor is preferably inserted where the handles were removed. The pull wagon adaptor includes a pair of steerable wheels and handle for pulling of the wagon. Other embodiments provide additional functionality for use of the wagon in a gardening type application. The push blade assembly is removably attached to the frame of the wheelbarrow at a front edge thereof.

4 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



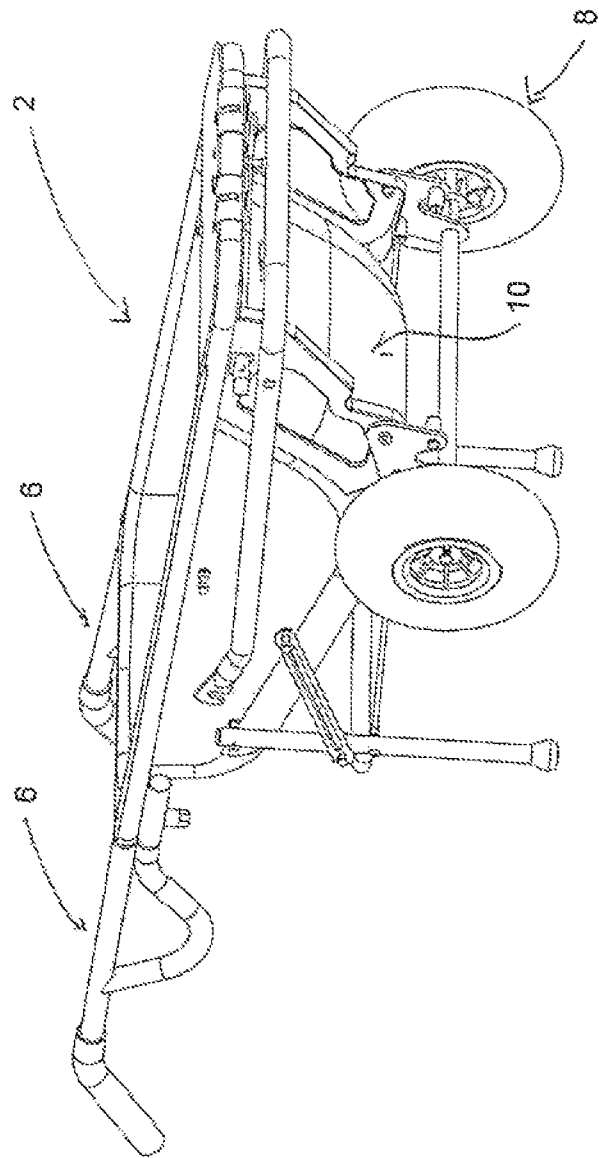


Fig. 1 (PRIOR ART)

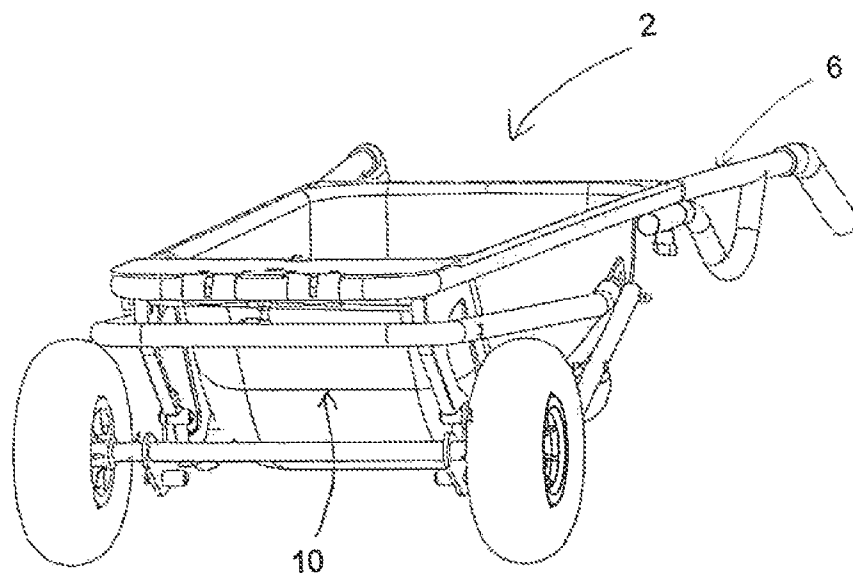


Fig. 2 (PRIOR ART)

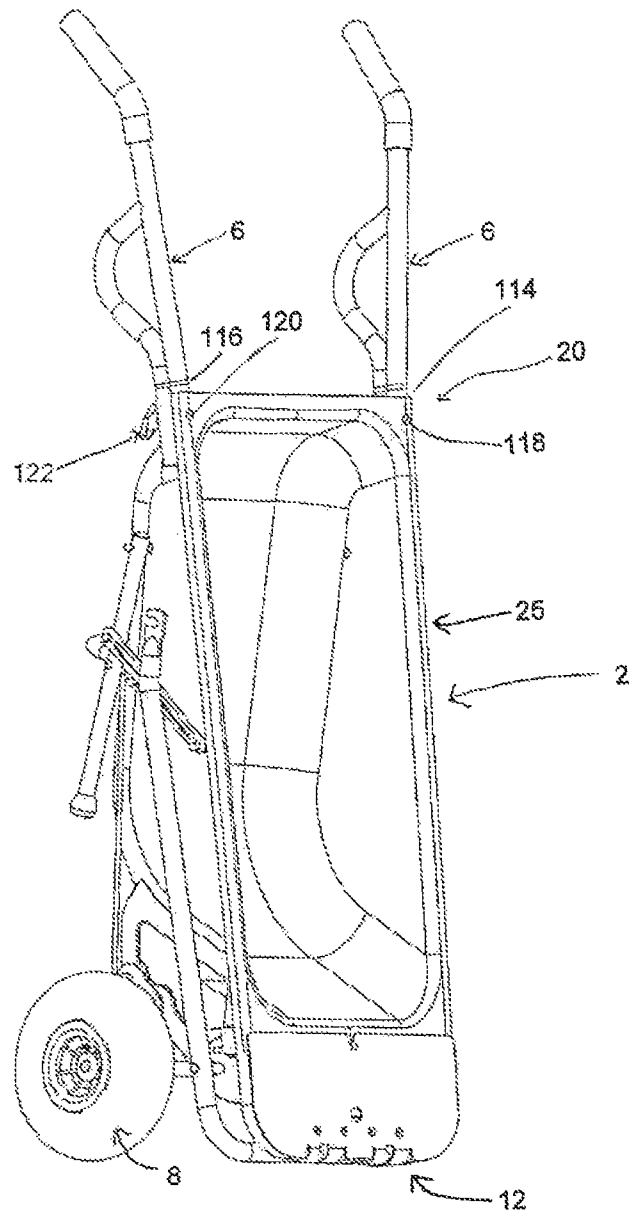
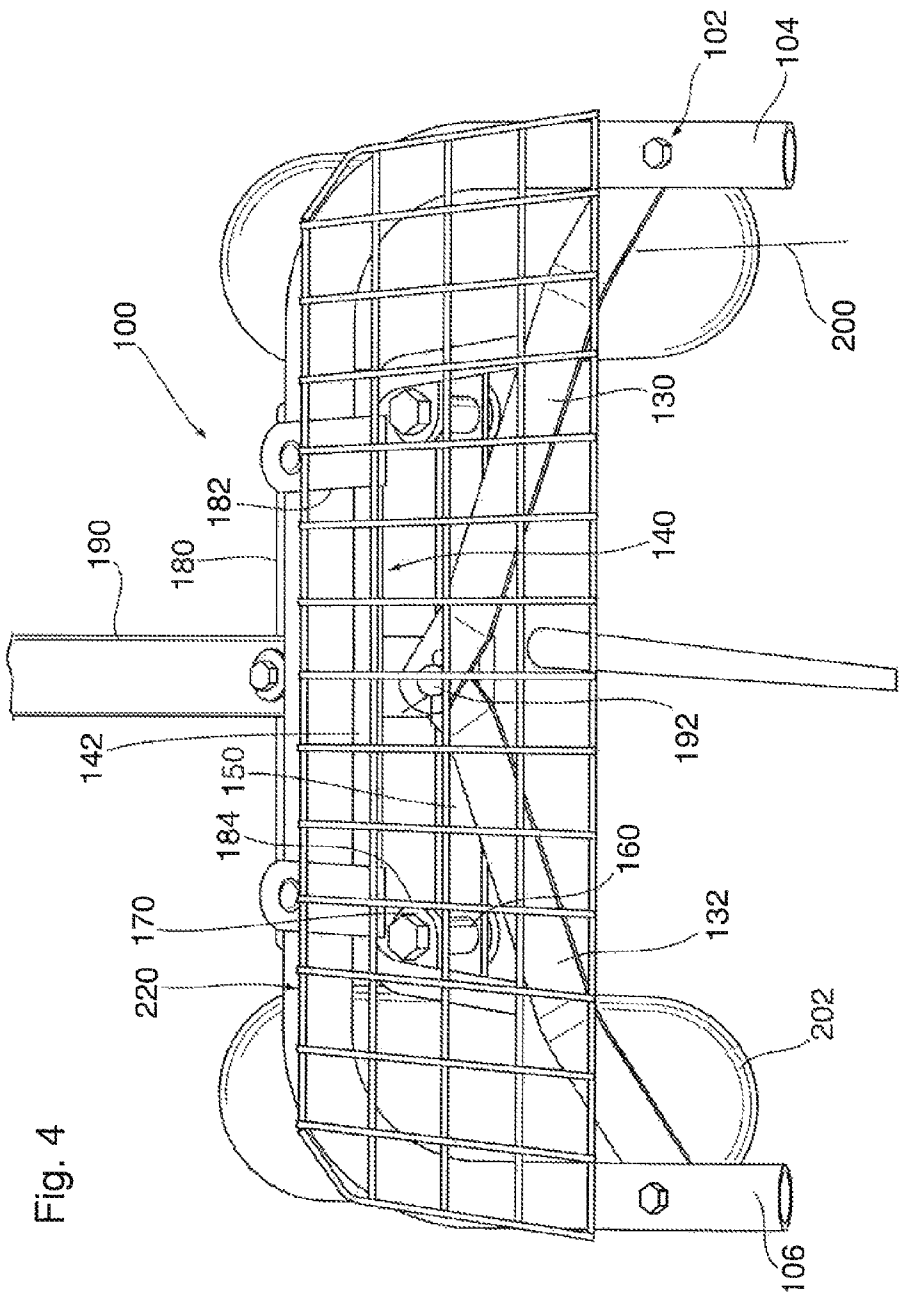
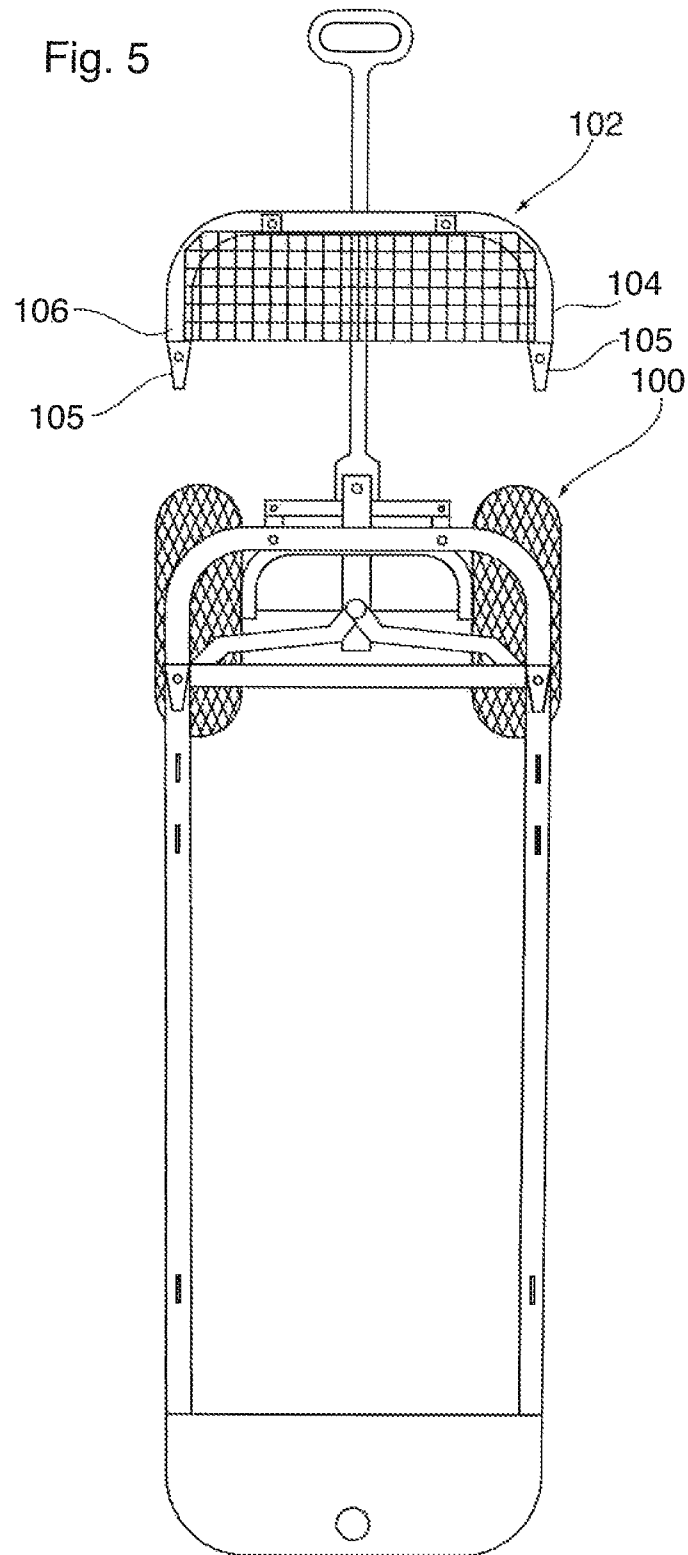


Fig. 3 (PRIOR ART)





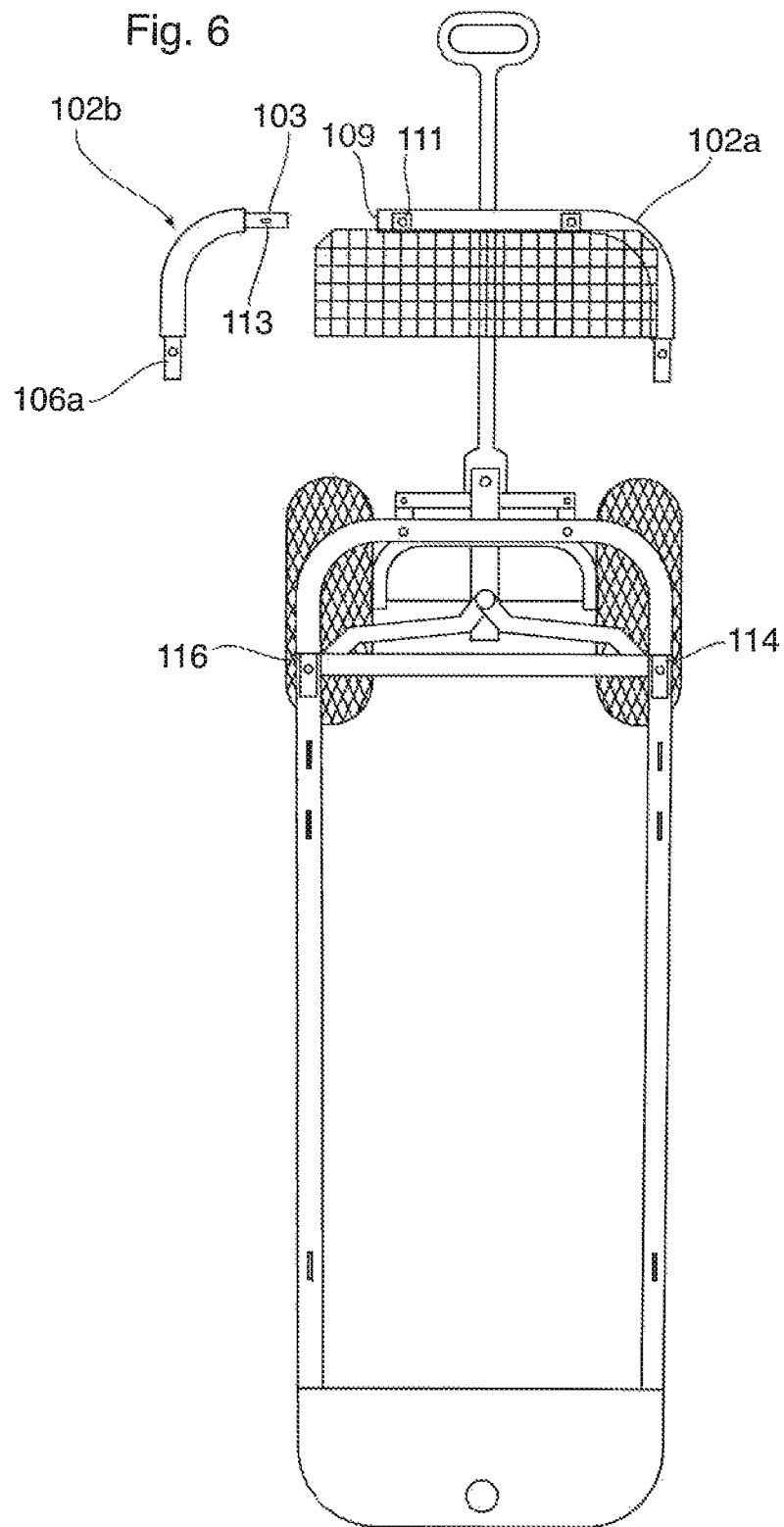
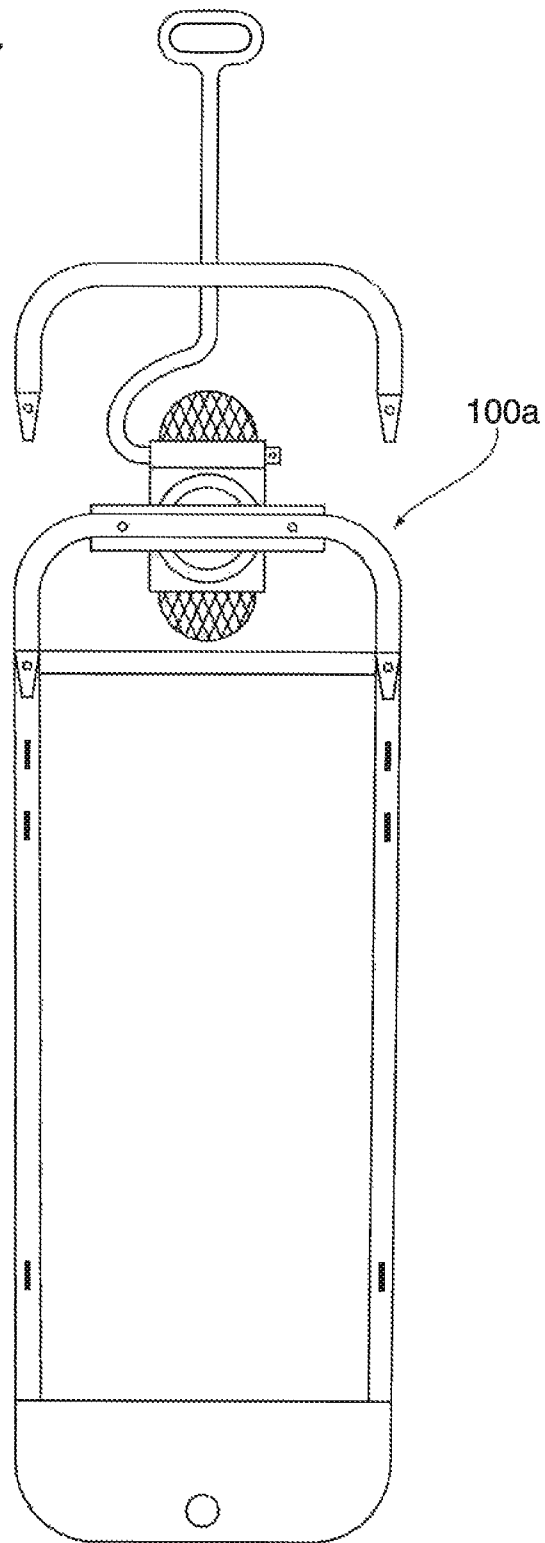


Fig. 7



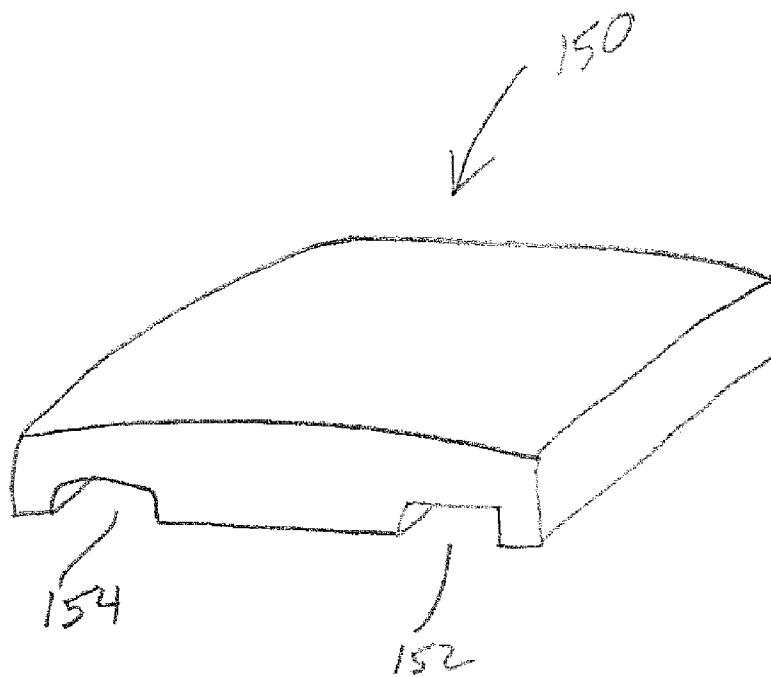
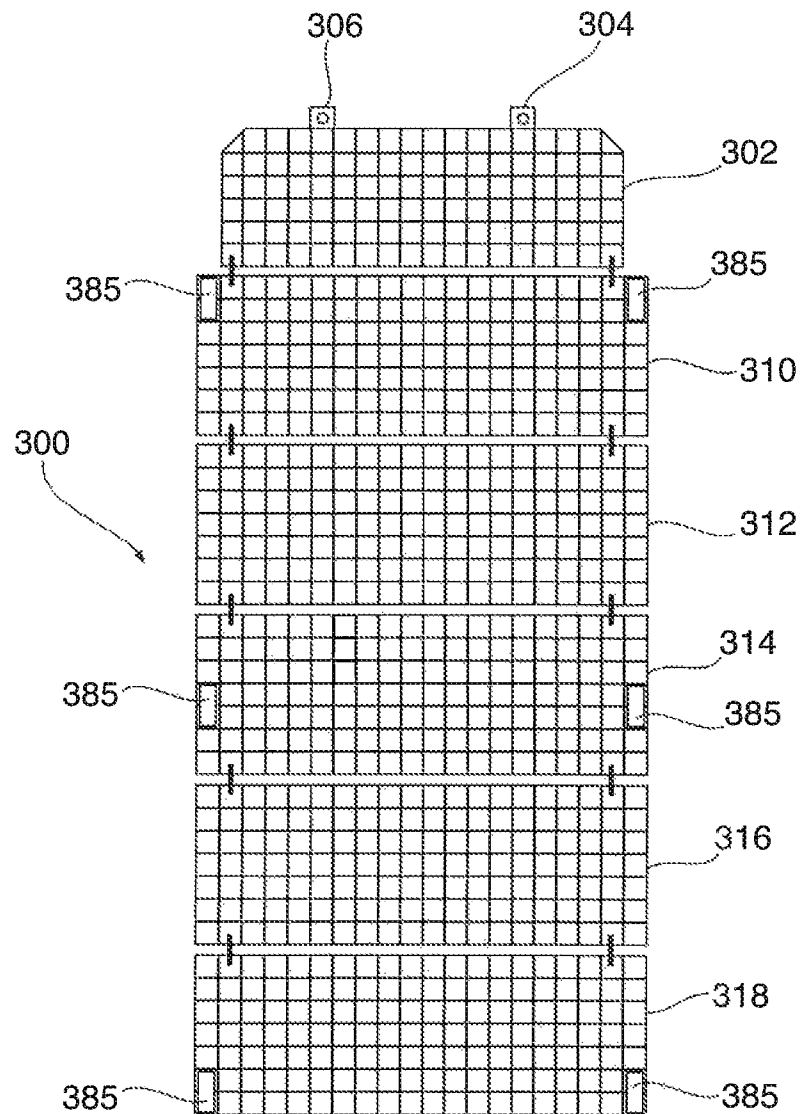


Fig. 8

Fig. 9



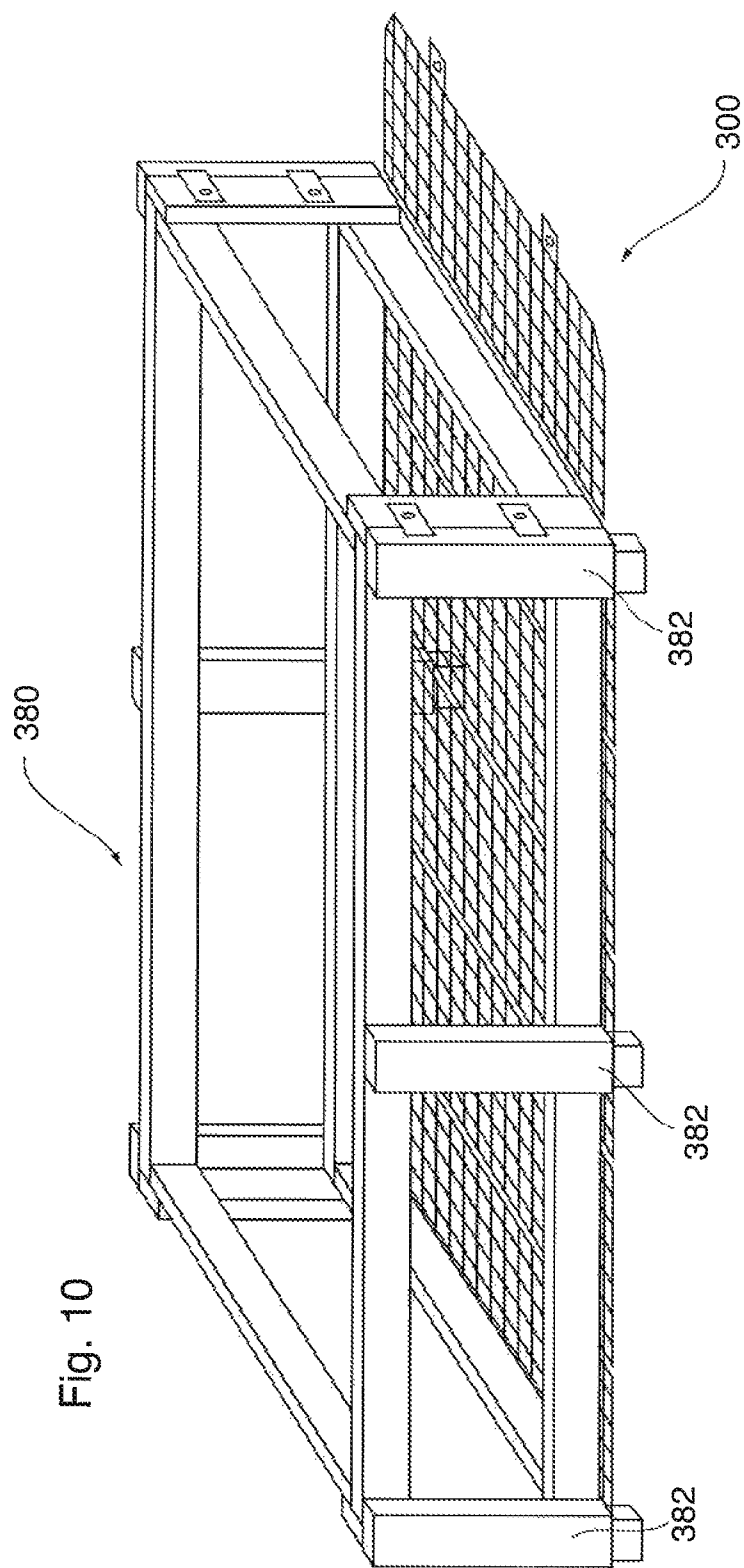


Fig. 11

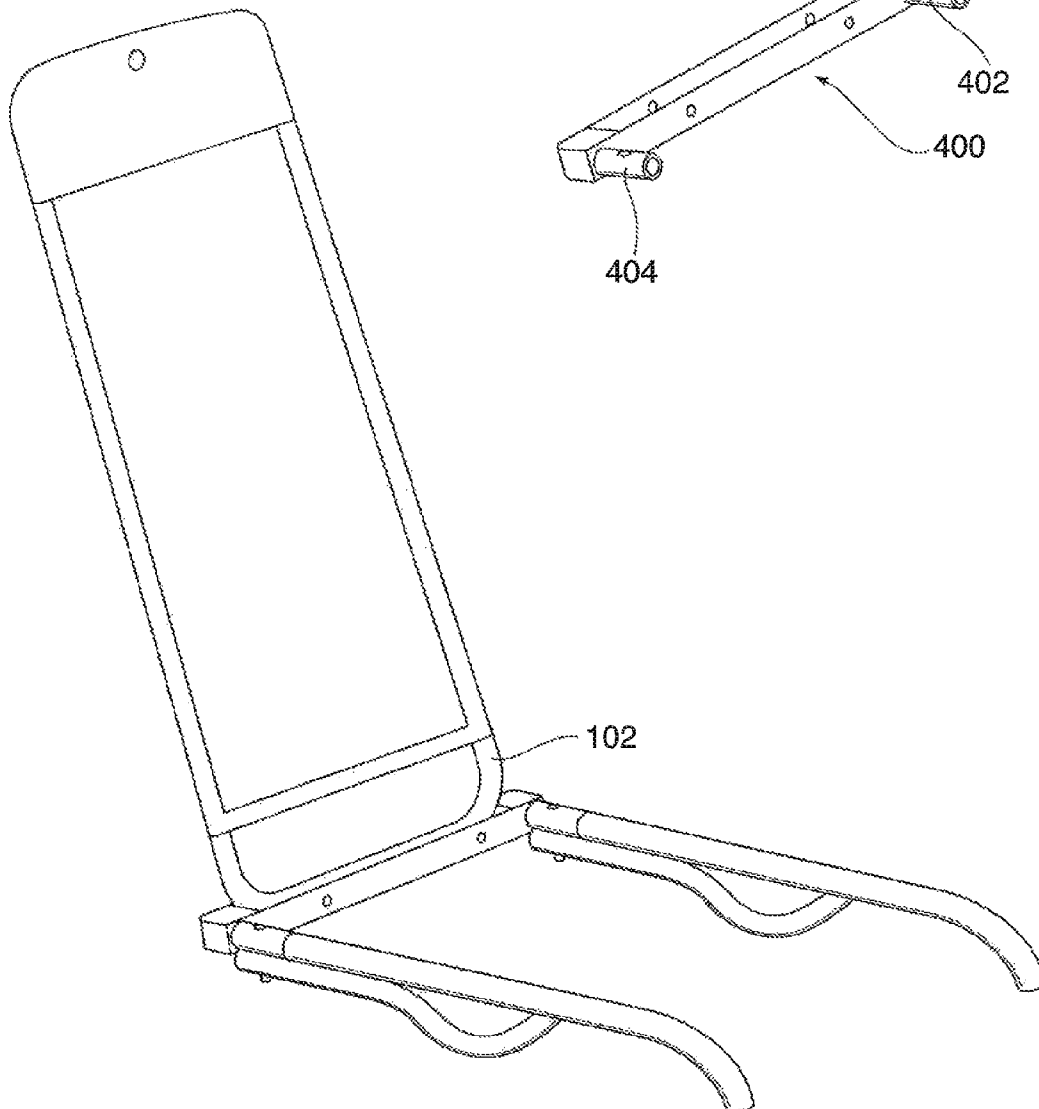


Fig. 12

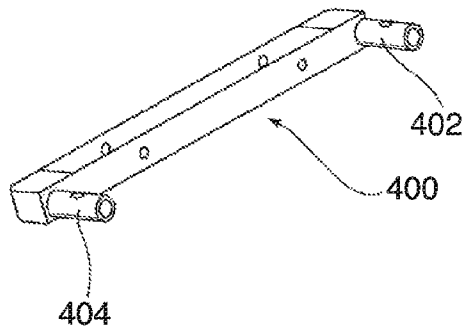
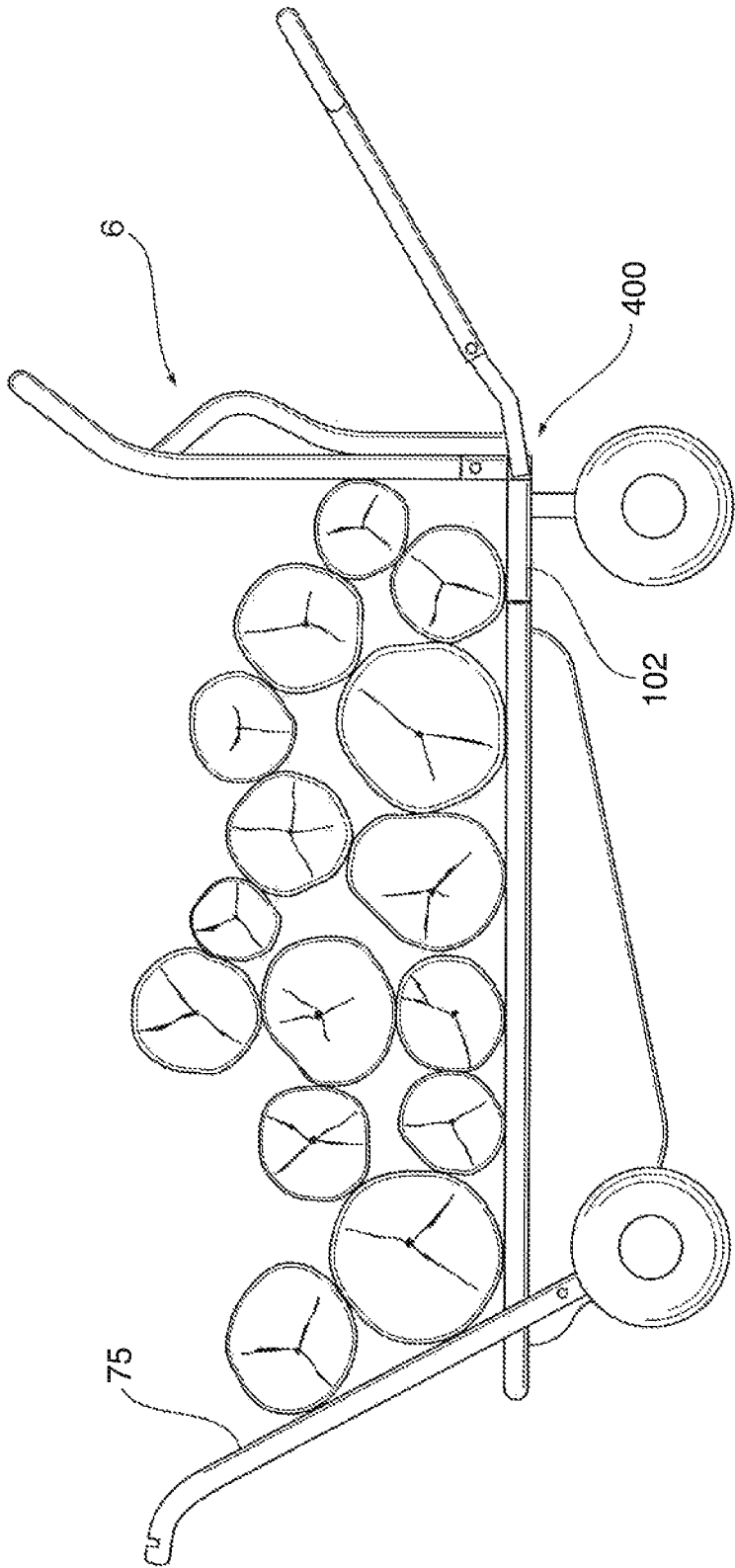


Fig. 13



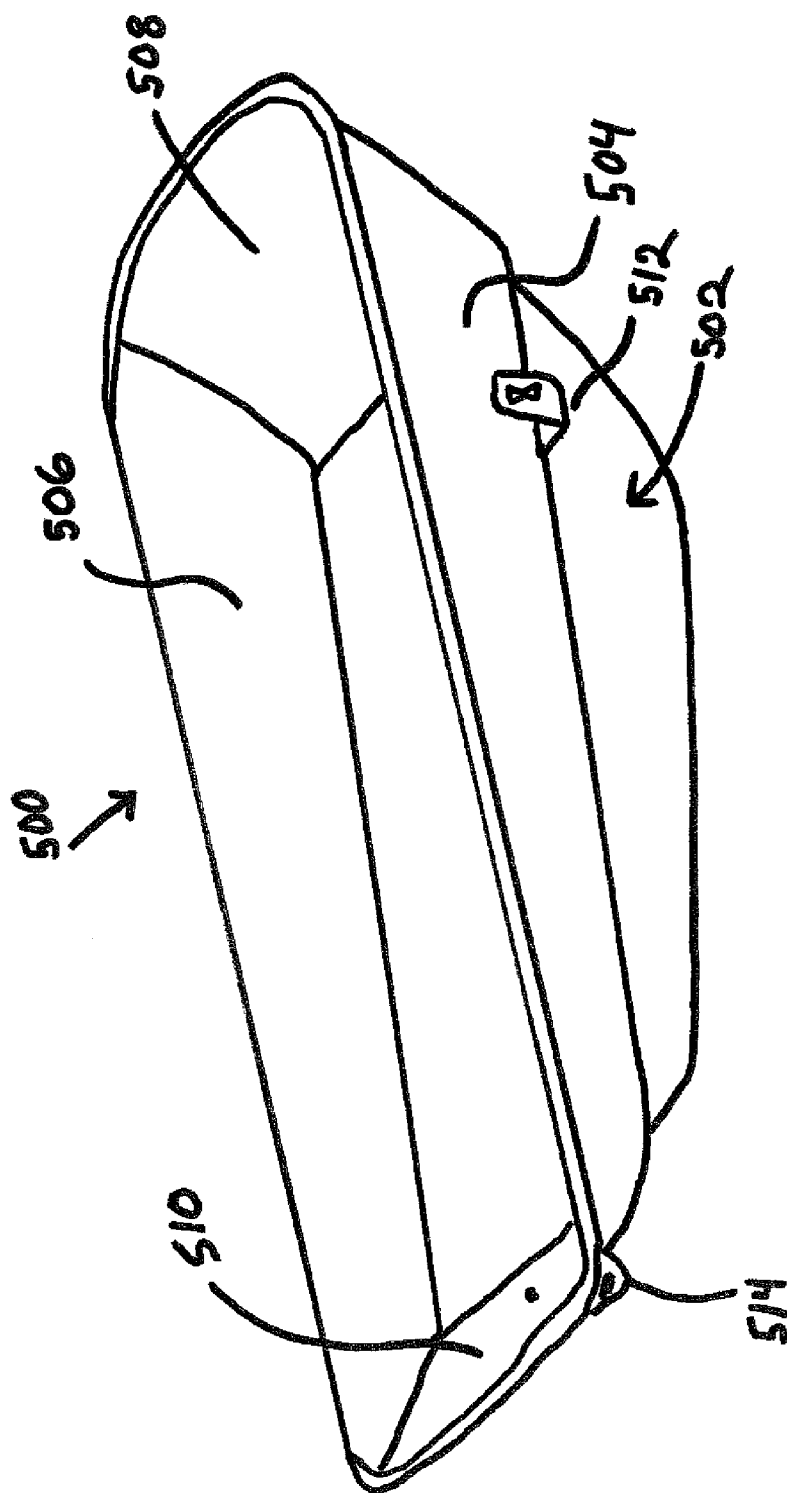


FIG. 14

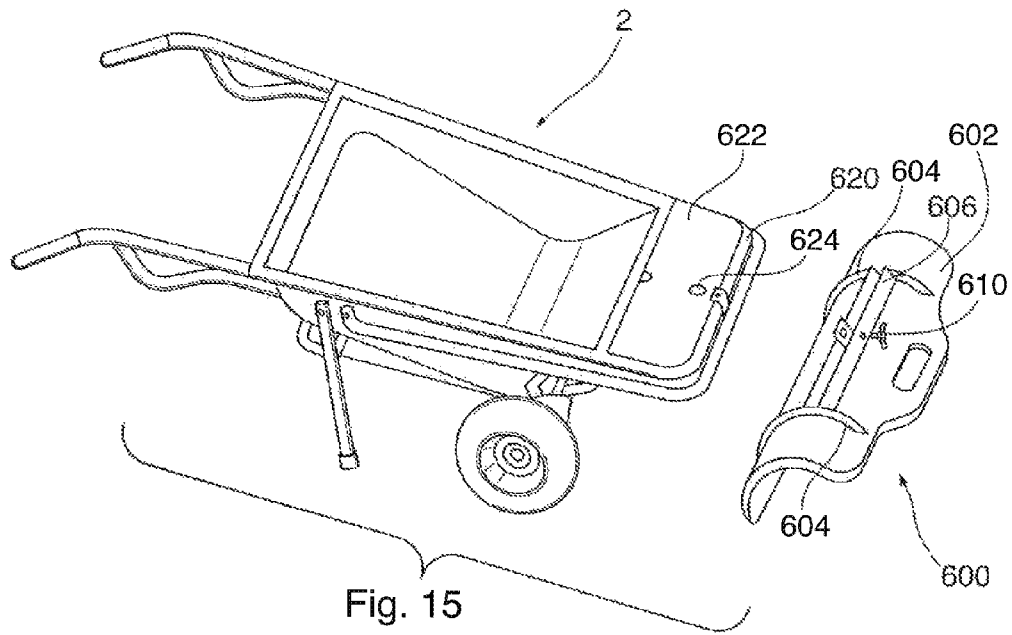


Fig. 16

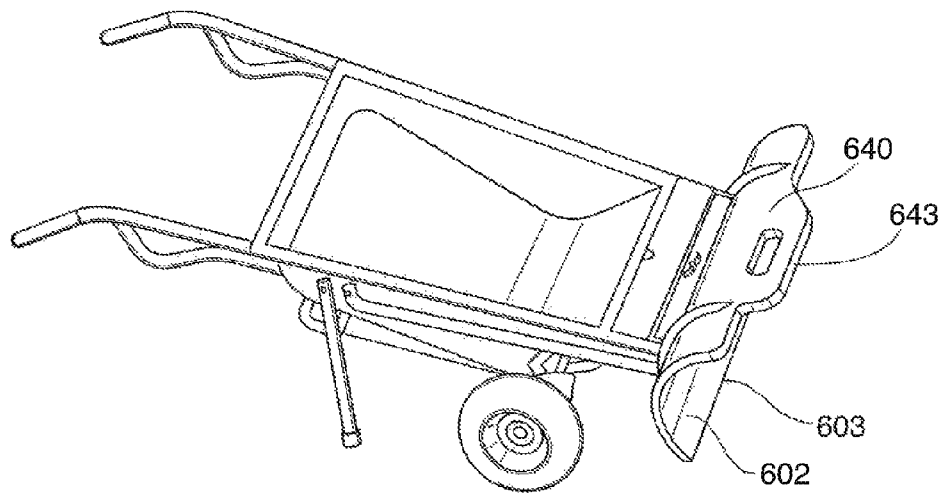


Fig. 17

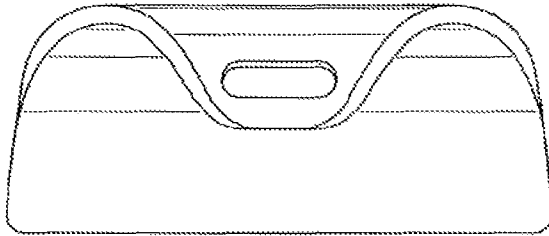
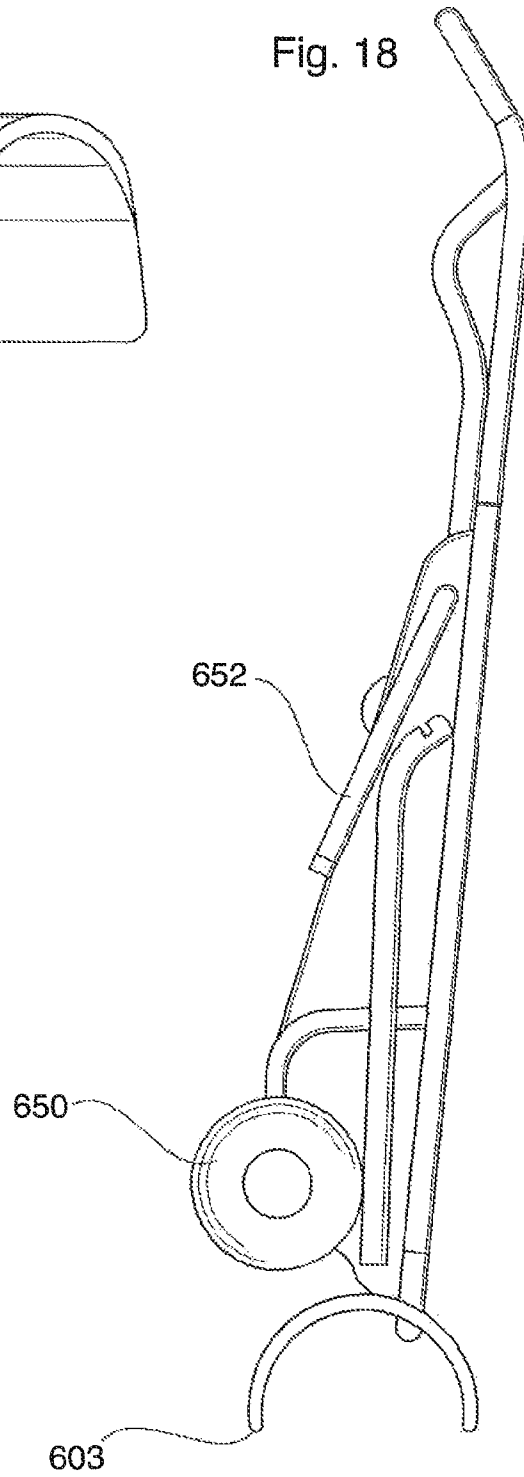


Fig. 18



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WHEELBARROW WAGON CONVERSION**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present application relates to a multi-function wheelbarrow and in particular to a number of cooperating components that extend the functionality of the wheelbarrow.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A multi-function hand truck is disclosed in my earlier U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,945,545 and 7,168,712 (incorporated herein by reference). The wheelbarrow structure includes moveable front wheels that allow the wheelbarrow to function in different manners including a vertical storage capability.

My multi-function wheelbarrow can also function as a hand truck and includes a pivoting arm structure for lifting of large loads or containers.

I have found that my convertible wheeled device has many applications around the home, but has proven particularly popular as a small wheelbarrow for gardening applications. To further extend the functionality of my wheelbarrow, I have invented a number of cooperating components that allow my multi-function wheelbarrow to convert to a wagon structure that preferably includes a support seat for the user. A number of further cooperating components are shown including a top support arrangement for the wheelbarrow when in a wagon configuration allowing material to be stored on the top thereof and also a vertically extending rail-type attachment for securement to a top surface of the wagon configuration. In a further embodiment, additional carrying capacity in a wheelbarrow application is achieved by extending the capacity of the wheelbarrow bucket.

In addition I have designed a snow plow attachment that advantageously can be used in the winter when the wheelbarrow otherwise would not be used.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A garden wagon according to the present invention comprises an elongate frame with a pair of non steerable wheels at one end thereof, a pair of side members extending from the one end towards a second end with the side members cooperating with the one end to support a load carrying container generally between and below the side members. The second end comprises a removable frame supported by the side frames and mechanically secured thereto. The removable frame includes a pair of steerable wheels supported below the removable frame and a pivoting steering handle coupled to the steerable wheels and allowing steering of the wagon when pulled by the handle.

In an aspect of the invention, the removable frame includes a U-shaped member with two connecting arms joined at one end of the arms by an intermediate portion. The connecting arms cooperate with the side members such that the removable frame closes the second end and forms an extension of the side frames.

In a further aspect of the invention, the connecting arms are received in the side frames and form a rigid extension of the side frames with the steerable wheel directly below the removable frame and forward of the load carrying container.

In a different aspect of the invention, a gardening container as claimed in claim 3 the steerable wheels include releasable brace members mechanically connecting a stationary frame supporting the steerable wheels to the side members.

In a different aspect of the invention a snow plow blade assembly can be secured to the front of a multi-function wheel

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barrow. Preferably the snow plow blade is an injection molded plastic component that preferably includes an integral mounting channel allowing releasable securement to a front tubular portion of the wheelbarrow frame. Preferably a bolt type fastener passes through a portion of the dolly truck load plate and draws two mounting flanges on the plow blade into locked engagement with a tubular component of the wheelbarrow frame.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments of the invention are shown in the drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of my convertible wheelbarrow structure in an operative configuration;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of my wheelbarrow structure with the wheels moved to a storage position;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of my wheelbarrow structure in a storage position;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a wagon wheel adaptor that can be attached to my wheelbarrow structure;

FIG. 5 is a top view illustrating attachment of my steerable wheel arrangement to one end of the frame of the multi-function wheelbarrow;

FIG. 6 is a top view similar to FIG. 5 showing an alternate adaptive frame for attaching wagon wheels to one end of my multi-function wheelbarrow;

FIG. 7 is a view similar to FIG. 5 illustrating a single wheel conversion arrangement;

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a seat that can be applied to opposite sides of the wheelbarrow to provide a seat for the user;

FIG. 9 is a partial perspective view of a foldable grid support that can be applied over the top of the wheelbarrow;

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the support arrangement of FIG. 9 in combination with a rail arrangement for attachment to the wheelbarrow;

FIG. 11 is a partial perspective view of a further adaption where the handles of the wheelbarrow can be secured at one end of the wagon structure;

FIG. 12 shows additional details of an adaptive bracket used in the structure of FIG. 11;

FIG. 13 is a side view of the multi-function wheelbarrow converted to a wagon and having upright supports;

FIG. 14 illustrates a molded wheelbarrow container of additional capacity that can be attached to my multi-function wheelbarrow;

FIG. 15 is a perspective view of the wheelbarrow and push blade assembly about to be secured to the wheelbarrow;

FIG. 16 is an assembled view of the wheelbarrow and push blade assembly;

FIG. 17 is a front view of the push blade; and

FIG. 18 is a sideview of the combination in a vertical storage position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

My multi-function wheelbarrow is shown in FIGS. 1, 2 and 3. The wheelbarrow 2 is shown in FIG. 1 in the operational position and the wheels 8 have been moved and are generally located below the front of the wheelbarrow container 10. It can be seen that the wheelbarrow includes two removable handles 6 provided at the opposite end of the wheelbarrow.

In FIG. 2, the wheels have been moved forwardly and inwardly and are located in front of and generally within the width of the container 10. This allows the wheelbarrow struc-

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ture to in one embodiment function as a hand truck and additionally to move to the wheels to the forward position shown in FIG. 3. Basically, the wheelbarrow can store in a vertical orientation supported by the wheels 8 and a front portion 12 as shown in FIG. 3.

It has been found that my wheelbarrow structure is particularly popular for home gardening applications perhaps due to its multi-function capability, unique wheelbarrow configuration and/or the ability to store in a space efficient manner.

FIG. 4 shows my wagon conversion structure that allows the wheelbarrow to additionally function as a pull wagon. A wagon adaptor 100 is shown in FIG. 4 and includes a U-shaped frame 102 having two slightly angled end tubes 104 and 106 that are sized for insertion in the end rail 20 where the handles 6 are normally secured. In order to secure the wagon adaptor 100, the handles 6 are removed and the end tubes 104 and 106 of the U-shaped bracket 102 are inserted in the upper ports 114 and 116 that normally receive the handles 6. The rails 20 of my structure slightly diverge from the end 12 towards the handles 6 and for this reason the ends 104 and 106 are slightly tapered to allow the ends 104 and 106 to be first inserted into the ports 114 and 116 and subsequently pushed to a secure position.

As shown in FIG. 3, the handles 6 are each secured to the body 25 of the wheelbarrow by bolts 118 and 120 and a handgrip nut shown as 122. To secure my wagon adaptor 100, the bolts 118 and 120 are removed, the handles 6 are removed from the wheelbarrow body 25. The ends 104 and 106 are inserted into the upper ports 114 and 116 that previously received the handles. The bolts 118 and 120 and handgrip nuts 122 are then reinserted and tightened to secure the ends 104 and 106 to the wheelbarrow body 25.

The bracket members 130 and 132 are located beneath the securing portion of the ports 114 and 116 and are also secured by the bolts 118 and 120. These basically provide a stabilizer arrangement for the downwardly extending wheel structure shown as 140. This downwardly extending wheel structure 140 includes a U-shaped member 142 secured to member 102 by bolts. Member 142 is connected by a flat bar member 150 that extends between the ends of the U-shaped bracket 142. The bar member 150 supports pivoting bushings 160 of each wheel between the member 150 and an upper bracket 170. Basically, the U-shaped member 142 is secured to member 150 by welding (or otherwise securing) the bracket 170 to the arms of the U-shaped bracket 142. A steering link 180 connects forwardly extending levers 182 and 184 of each wheel and allow pivoting and steering of the wagon. A steering handle shown as 190 pivots about 192 and thus, movement of the handle 190 causes a shifting of the steering linkage 180.

It can be appreciated that other arrangements for steering of the wheels 200 and 202 can be provided. The important aspect is the securing of the wagon adaptor 100 to one end of the frame of my wheelbarrow remote the original wheelbarrow wheels 8. Preferably, this securement is achieved using the U-shaped bracket 102 having the end portions 104 and 106 thereof inserted in the securing ports that normally receive the removable handles 6. Tightening of the bolts 118 and 120 firmly secure the U-shaped bracket 102 to the end of the wheelbarrow remote the original wheels 8 and allow conversion to a steerable wagon.

With the adaptor 100 secured at the end of my multi-function wheelbarrow it has now been converted to a wagon-type structure having a pivoting handle for pulling and steering of the wagon. The attachment of the wagon adaptor 100 advantageously uses the existing structure of the wheelbarrow to allow the wagon adaptor 100 to be a simple structure that is easily secured.

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As previously mentioned, the ends 104 and 106 slightly include a taper for ease of attachment. This allows the ends 104 and 106 to initially be placed in the ports 114 and 116 as there is some play due to the taper. Once the ends have been inserted, it is then possible to push the adaptor 100 to a secure position where the bolts 118 and 120 and the handgrip nuts can be reattached. As can be appreciated, this movement to the securing position as shown in FIG. 5 provides a snug removable fit of the ends 104 and 106 in the ports 114 and 116. Furthermore, the wagon adaptor 100 is held in place and effectively tightened by the bolts 114 and 116.

As shown in the top view of FIG. 5, the ends 104 and 106 can also include a tapered insert 105 and 107 that are permanently secured to the ends of the U-shaped bracket 102. The purpose of the tapered plugs 105 and 107 is to simplify securement while also allowing a snug fit of the wagon adaptor 100 to the rail members of the body of the wheelbarrow.

As shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, the U-shaped bracket 102 preferably includes a cover screen 220. The cover screen 220 effectively closes the gap between the arms of the U-shaped bracket and acts as a barrier to the underlying space used by the steering linkage. This parallelogram-type steering linkage is a potential safety hazard and the screen 220 acts as a safety guard against inadvertent insertion of hands or fingers into this space.

In the alternate embodiment of FIG. 6, the U-shaped bracket 102 has been broken into a first component 102A and a second component 102B. These components are secured to each other by a plug portion 103 being inserted in the end 109 and mechanically fastening the bolt 111 that passes through the elongate port 113. The elongate port 113 allows for some play or movement between the two brackets before the bolt 111 is tightened. This allows initial insertion of ends 104A and 106A in the ports 114 and 116. The components 102A and 102B can then be moved to a secured position where parts 102A and 102B basically abutt. 102A and 102B are then fixed by tightened of the bolt 111.

In FIG. 7, a different wagon adaptor 100A is shown that again uses a U-shaped bracket however in this case, a single wheel is secured beneath the U-shaped bracket. This structure is somewhat simpler than the embodiment of FIG. 6 or FIG. 5 however the single wheel is not as stable as the dual wheel embodiment. The double wheel arrangement of FIGS. 4 and 5 is preferred.

In FIG. 7, a seat 150 is shown that is of a size to straddle the wheelbarrow cavity such that the side rails of the wheelbarrow pass through the elongate slots 152 and 154. With this arrangement, the seat 150 may be placed over the wheelbarrow cavity and the top surface of the seat provides the support for a user. Thus the user can convert the wheelbarrow structure to the wagon arrangement and this essentially supports the upper edge of the wheelbarrow in a horizontal manner. The rails of the wheelbarrow that are extending from end to end can be located within the slots 152 and 154. It has been found that when a person is gardening it may be desirable to use the seat from time to time. Various arrangements can be used to secure the seat (including a simple pin arrangement) if desired.

In FIG. 9, a foldable grid support 300 is shown. This includes a grid portion 302 at one end thereof having tab-type members 304 and 306. These members can be fixedly secured to the U-shaped bracket 102 in a manner as shown in FIG. 4. Preferably the grid support 300 includes individual grid sections 302, 310, 312, 314, 316 and 318. These sections are preferably hingedly connected to one another to allow folding of the support on the sections to provide a compact storage

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arrangement. As can be appreciated, it is desirable that the support be convertible to a storage arrangement for space efficiency.

The support **300** is designed to cover the open cavity of the wheelbarrow and is secured to the wheelbarrow upper portion in any of a number of different ways. For example, small tabs may be provided around the edge of the wheelbarrow cavity to allow securement. An alternate embodiment is shown in FIG. **10** where the support **300** includes an upper rail portion **380**. The support **300** includes slot areas **385** for receiving the vertical rail members **382** that are received in ports (not shown) provided the upper edge of the wheelbarrow. With this arrangement, the wagon has a rail arrangement similar to many known child's wagons. The purpose of the wagon is for gardening-type applications as opposed to a structure for use by a child. However the rail arrangement is useful in supporting loads placed on the support member **300**.

FIGS. **11** and **12** show a further embodiment of the invention where the bracket member **400** co-operates with the U-shaped member **102** and provides upwardly extending securing plugs **402** and **404** for receiving the handles **6**. The handles **6** effectively slide over the plugs **402** and **404** and can be secured thereto by bolts. With this arrangement, the wagon structure can additionally be pushed from one end as opposed to being pulled.

In FIG. **13**, it can be seen that the wagon structure now has the handles **6** secured in a vertical manner by the bracket **400** to the U-shaped member **102**. In addition, the lifting arms **75** have been moved to their normal operating position and form a further upwardly extending support member. With this structure as shown in FIG. **13**, the wagon includes upwardly extending members to allow stacking of material on the top support of the wagon or stacked in the wagon cavity.

In FIG. **14**, a further embodiment of my invention is shown wherein a further molded wheelbarrow cavity **500** is shown. This member includes a lower portion **502** that is shaped for a snug fit within the existing cavity of the wheelbarrow. Member **500** includes outwardly extending side members **504** and **506** and outwardly extending end portions **508** and **510**. A series of clips or brackets **512** and **514** can be provided around the perimeter of member **500** for engagement with the upper portion of the wheelbarrow. In this way, the higher capacity insert **500** can be inserted and held within the wheelbarrow. This allows the capacity of the wheelbarrow to be extended in a simply manner and to also allow for other uses that may require additional capacity. Furthermore, there may be applications where it is desirable to protect the normal cavity of the wheelbarrow and this can be done by inserting the larger cavity member **500**.

Member **500** need not include a bottom portion to provide the additional capacity. In an open structure of member **500**, the bottom portion of the existing wheelbarrow cavity is used and member **500** merely extends the sides and end walls.

As shown in the drawings, my convertible wheelbarrow structure has been further enhanced by the addition of a wagon adaptor at one end of the wheelbarrow and a series of additional components that allow the converted wagon structure and/or wheelbarrow structure to function in different manners.

A further embodiment of my invention is shown in FIGS. **15** through **18**. In this embodiment a snow plow blade is releasably attached to the front of the wheelbarrow to allow conversion for simplifying snow removal in the winter.

FIG. **15** shows the push blade assembly **600** for securement to the front edge of my multifunction wheelbarrow shown as **2** that is particularly effective for snow shovelling. The front of my wheelbarrow includes a circular in cross section tube

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620 that forms part of the frame of the wheelbarrow. The push blade **602** is preferably an injection molded plastic component as the traditional curved blade surface of a traditional push snow shovel. Injection molded push blade **602** includes reinforcing ribs **604** and also includes the mounting U-shaped channel **606** that extends horizontally across the back of the blade. This U-shaped channel is open rearwardly and allows sliding onto the circular tube **620** provided at the front of the wheelbarrow. This dolly plate **622** includes a mounting port **624** which can also be used in association with the trailer ball hitch attachment. In this case the mounting port is open and cooperates with the center mounting bolt **610** that extends through and is perpendicular to the U-shaped mounting channel **606** and will pass through the mounting port **624**. A nut can be injection molded into the plastic U-shaped channel **606** or a separate metal nut can be provided to cooperate and lock with the center mounting bolt **610**.

FIG. **16** shows the snow shovel push blade assembly mounted on and secured to the front portion of the multifunction wheelbarrow **2**. The U-shaped mounting channel **606** straddles the circular tube **620** and the snow shovel push blade assembly is secured on the front end of the wheelbarrow by the center mounting bolt **610** in cooperation with a threaded port or nut **612**.

It has been found that the snow shovel push blade assembly, when mounted on the multi-function wheelbarrow operates best with the wheels of the multi-function wheelbarrow lowered to the wheelbarrow position. In this case the lower edge of the push blade **602** is raised slightly above ground level whereby a user needs to tilt the wheelbarrow upwardly such that it pivots about the wheels and brings the front edge **603** of the push blade **602** into contact with the ground. The user then merely advances the wheelbarrow in a traditional manner keeping the push blade **602** in engagement with the ground and pushes snow that may be in contact therewith. The typical curve shape of the push blade allows snow to accumulate in front of the blade.

The snow that is accumulated on the blade can be pushed to the side of the driveway or to the side of an area being shoveled and the user can then quickly push down on the wheelbarrow handles causing the wheelbarrow to pivot at the base of the rear legs. This action causes the front of the wheelbarrow and the blade to pop upwardly quickly. The combination of the downward movement, the fast displacement of the front of the wheelbarrow and the resiliency of the blade, acts to partially distort the push blade and cause snow to be displaced upwardly and forwardly and separate from the blade. This assists in unloading of the snow shovel and displacing any snow a short distance in front of the push blade. Some distortion of the blade is desirable but not essential for snow separation.

The arrangement as shown in FIG. **16** is effective as the user is not directly supporting the shovel but is merely bringing the shovel into engagement with the surface to be plowed and then the wheelbarrow is advanced. The support is provided by the wheels of the wheelbarrow. This arrangement and the leverage possible by the rearwardly extending handles provides an effective arrangement for simplifying the plowing of snow and the subsequent displacement or discharge of the snow from the push blade.

The push blade **602** also includes a center forwardly extending section **640** that includes an open port **642** forming a handle portion. The handle portion is helpful in relocating the wheelbarrow or moving the wheelbarrow and the forwardly extending portion provides a support function as shown in FIG. **18**. One of the problems associated with wheelbarrows in general is the amount of space required to

store the wheelbarrow. If it is stored on the floor of a garage it can occupy a significant amount of space and may prevent the garage from being used for its intended purpose. Often wheelbarrows, because of their size, are stored outside perhaps behind a shed or other structure and essentially hidden from view. They can also be hung from a wall but this is not particularly convenient.

In the present system the multifunction wheelbarrow includes a pair of front wheels **650** either side of the wheelbarrow that are displaceable from a dolly use position to a wheelbarrow use position. The wheels **650** are movable rearwardly from the storage position shown in FIG. **18** to a wheelbarrow position shown in FIG. **16**. This is typically carried out by a linkage associated with the rear legs **652** as described earlier in the application and in my earlier patent.

In order to reduce the space necessary to store the combination wheelbarrow and snow shovel it is designed to be stored vertically as shown in FIG. **18**. The front edge **603** of the push blade **602** can engage the ground and the front edge **643** of the forwardly extending portion **640** can also engage the ground. This effectively provides a stable support arrangement for the wheelbarrow to allow it to be stored vertically as shown in FIG. **18**. The wheels have been moved to the dolly position (preferred), however the device is also stable with the wheels in the wheelbarrow position. As can be appreciated, in the wheelbarrow position the amount of space required to store the snow shovel push blade and wheelbarrow is larger and the device is not as stable. Therefore it is anticipated and recommended that the storage position as shown in FIG. **18** be used.

It has been found that this arrangement allows the multifunction wheelbarrow to assist in what can often be a difficult task during the winter. Snow removal in northern climates can be quite difficult and lifting of snow can cause potential injuries associated with the back and/or legs and has been a factor in certain heart attacks caused by physical exertion.

With the present invention the snow shovel push blade is supported by the multifunction wheelbarrow and the user merely pushes the arrangement. When it is time to unload the snow shovel blade at the edge of a driveway one can merely push it to the edge or can push it to the edge and then quickly discharge the snow by pushing downwardly causing snow to be displaced. The stability of the wheels **650** either side of the multifunction wheelbarrow assist in providing a stable structure and one that is helpful to change and reduce the physical requirements for snow removal in a favorable manner.

Although it is possible to mount the snow blade in a number of different ways the one central bolt cooperating with an existing port in the multifunction wheelbarrow has a number of advantages. The U-shaped channel engaging the front of the wheelbarrow provides good support during the pushing of the snow and discharge of the snow from the blade. With this structure effective securement of the push blade to the multifunction wheelbarrow is achieved while it also allows simple removal if the user so chooses for example at the end of the winter season.

A significant advantage of the present system is that the structure of the multifunction wheelbarrow and particularly the frame thereof and wheels, are advantageously used to support the push blade and thus the cost of this arrangement is quite favorable relative to even the purchase of a snow shovel. For example, given that the user already has purchased the multifunction wheelbarrow the purchase of the additional snow shovel push blade assembly is comparable to the purchase of a reasonable quality snow shovel and the arrangement provides a number of significant advantages which can reduce the physical requirement for clearing of the snow during the winter months.

Although the push blade assembly has been described with respect to snow removal, it can also be used for moving other materials.

Although preferred embodiments of the invention have been described herein, it would be understood by those skilled in the art that variations may be made thereto and these variations are intended to be covered by the appended claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A garden wagon comprising an elongate frame with a pair of non steerable wheels at one end thereof, a pair of side members extending from said one end towards a second end with said side members cooperating with said one end to support a load carrying container generally between and below said side members, said second end comprising a removable frame supported by said side frames and mechanically secured thereto; said removable frame including a pair of steerable wheels and steering linkage supported below said removable frame and a pivoting steering handle coupled to said steerable wheels and allowing steering of said wagon when pulled by said handle and positioned to appropriately position said steerable wheels; and

wherein said removable frame includes a U-shaped member with two connecting arms joined at one end of said arms by an intermediate portion, said connecting arms cooperating with said side members such that said removable frame closes said second end and forms an extension of said frames.

2. A garden wagon as claimed in claim 1 wherein said two connecting arms and said intermediate portions are integral.

3. A garden wagon as claimed in claim 1 wherein said connecting arms are received in said side frames to form a rigid extension of said frames with said steerable wheels directly below said removable frame and forward of said load carrying container.

4. A garden wagon as claimed in claim 3 wherein said removable frame includes releasable brace members mechanically connecting a lower stationary frame supporting said steerable wheels to said side members; said lower stationary frame forming part of a steering support arrangement for said steerable wheels.

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